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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

Mayor Newsom and SFMTA Announce Federal Approval for Central Subway to Begin Final Design

San Francisco, CA – Mayor Newsom and the SFMTA today announced that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has granted the Central Subway approval to enter into Final Design (FD) for the Central Subway Project, which is Phase II of the Third Street Light Rail Project that will connect communities from Visitacion Valley to Chinatown with modern, convenient light rail. The Third Street Light Rail project represents the most significant investment in the expansion of the Muni system in generations.

"This federal endorsement is crucial to building the Central Subway and improving our environment," said Mayor Gavin Newsom. "Our appreciation goes out to Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senator Dianne Feinstein and Senator Barbara Boxer for their continued leadership and support of light rail expansion in San Francisco."

"We are deeply gratified by this decision," said Nathaniel P. Ford Sr., SFMTA Executive Director/CEO. "We are making tremendous progress toward improved transportation for the communities along the congested corridor that the Central Subway will serve."

This FTA endorsement marks a crucial milestone for the Central Subway project. Approval to enter into Final Design means that for every dollar the SFMTA spends on Final Design for the Central Subway Project, the SFMTA will be reimbursed with federal funds.

In 2009, the Central Subway project received a positive review as part of the technically rigorous federal New Starts program with a "medium-high" project justification rating and "medium-high" overall rating. The project also received a "high" rating for both environmental and transit supportive land use benefits. The project recently received \$6 million as part of the federal Fiscal Year 2010 transportation appropriations bill.

Approval to enter into Final Design comes as the Central Subway is moving forward on a variety of fronts. The project is negotiating and awarding design contracts for the tunnel, stations and systems work, and this month utility relocation work is beginning near the tunnel portal and the future Moscone Station in the South of Market neighborhood.

The 1.7-mile Central Subway will extend light rail service with a surface stop on 4th Street near Brannan Street and subway service with stations at the Moscone Center, Union Square and Chinatown neighborhoods. It will operate as an extension of the T Third light rail line which opened for full revenue service in April 2007. The two-phase Third Street Light Rail Project will unite the City's established civic, business, retail and cultural centers with the diverse communities along the light rail line and encourage economic revitalization along the entire corridor.



The project is expected to begin service in December 2018 and is estimated to cost \$1.6 billion, with almost \$1 billion slated to come from the federal government. The SFMTA continues to work with local, state and regional partners to secure non-federal funding to work toward a Full Funding Grant Agreement with the Federal Transit Administration in Fiscal Year 2011.

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) has estimated that for every \$1 billion spent on transportation infrastructure projects, 30,000 jobs will be created. During these difficult economic times, the progress and development of the Central Subway will employ thousands of individuals throughout the Bay Area and beyond. In addition, this project will enhance the City's transportation system by making it more efficient and environmentally friendly.

"This welcome news is a great way to start the New Year," said Board of Supervisors President David Chiu. "The Central Subway project will increase Muni ridership, reduce our carbon footprint and provide construction jobs for San Franciscans at a critical time."

For more information on the FTA's New Starts, program, see http://www.fta.dot.gov/planning/planning_environment_5221.html.

For more information on the Central Subway project, and to follow the project on Twitter and Facebook, go to www.sfmta.com/central.

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